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ABSTRACT

This paper describes three paradigmatic "change facilitator styles": initiator, manager, and responder. These styles were identified through observations of principals' school improvement practices and the effects that those practices had on implementation at the classroom level. Initiators have clear, decisive long-range policies and goals that transcend but include implementation of the current innovation. Managers combine responsive behavior with initiating actions; the variations in their behavior are linked to their rapport with teachers and central office staff, and to their understanding and acceptance of a change effort. Responders focus on traditional administrative tasks, allowing teachers to take the lead in initiating change; they tend to make decisions in response to immediate circumstances, rather than in accordance with long-range goals. The Principal-Teacher Interaction Study, in which nine elementary school principals from three school districts and their staffs involved in the implementation of curriculum innovations were studied, is described. The overall conclusion of the systematic study is cited: principals did indeed carry out interventions in ways consistent with each of the three change facilitator styles previously identified. Implications of these three styles for training of principals, the planning of implementation efforts, and the monitoring of school improvement and school effectiveness efforts are discussed. (TE)

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# THREE PRINCIPAL STYLES OF FACILITATING SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT*

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In the last several years as national, regional and local attention has increasingly focused on school improvement, and school effectiveness, the principal has once again become the center of attention. National commissions, superintendents, school boards and others are charging principals with responsibility and accountability for improvement and increased effectiveness within their schools.

At the same time, policymakers and researchers are again examining the leadership characteristics of principals. There has been an enormous amount of effort put into studying the role of the principal especially in the elementary schools. For thirty years now the research has emphasized that the principal is important. The various ways that principals spend their time have been described and their theoretical models have been developed to describe the different leadership styles that principals and other leaders can use. Yet, the detail of what principals should do on a day-to-day basis as they facilitate implementation has not been as clearly specified.

In recent studies at the Research and Development Center for Teacher Education, the details of the principal's role in facilitating school improvement has been studied. A series of studies have been conducted in which the principal's "Change Facilitating Style" has been examined. The particular change facilitating styles being studied were derived from earlier research on implementation of innovations at the classroom level. That is, these descriptions of principal style have not come from theory, but rather from observation of principal practice and the consequent effects that their practice has had upon implementation at the classroom level.

In this presentation three different Change Facilitator Styles, Responder, Manager and Initiator, that have been the subject of study by staff of the R&D Center for Teacher Education are described. The related research is briefly abstracted and implications of these three change facilitator styles for principal training, the planning

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of implementation efforts and the monitoring of school improvement and school effectiveness efforts are discussed.

## The Principal as Change Facilitator

That principals make a difference in the functioning of schools seems fairly obvious. The traditional research and theory building around leadership, leadership styles, educational administration, change and industrial psychology have suggested overall strategies and conceptual frameworks that could be used to analyze the role and functioning of the principal. However, the extensive research and literature that is available has been slow in identifying specific behaviors that principals can do that will make a difference. More recently research findings from the school effectiveness studies have included descriptions of behaviors of principals that were found in the more effective schools (Edmonds, 1979; Leithwood & Montgomery, 1982).

The research that is described here focused upon the role of the principal in a very specific context, that of facilitating teachers' use of new instructional programs. Rather than attempting to look at the broad array of activities and roles of the principal, the emphasis was placed specifically upon what principals do in relation to curriculum implementation. Thus, it has been possible to conceptualize more clearly what is meant about style, by relating it specifically to change facilitation and further, it has been possible to distinguish between an overall gestalt of a principal's style (Rutherford, Hord, Huling & Hall, 1983) and individual behaviors that a principal takes from moment to moment in relation to implementation. These differences in assumptions and framework have resulted in a set of research studies and findings that clearly have implication for practice, training, planning future implementation efforts and future research studies.

The change facilitating styles that are described in more detail below were initially derived out of secondary analysis of an implementation effort that encompassed eighty elementary schools in one large suburban school district. The innovation was a revised science curriculum that was being implemented by teachers in grades 3-6. The district had provided the same level of inservice, material support and consultation to teachers as they were involved in implementation.

In the study that was being conducted at that time, teachers' Stages of Concern about the innovation and their Level of Use of the science materials were systematically assessed in twenty study schools. One clear finding from that study was that in some schools implementation moved more easily with more refined use of the science program than had occurred in other schools. These schools appeared to be similar in terms of demographics, financial resources, and the outside staff development support that had been available. The only difference that could be systematically identified between the

schools had to do with characteristics of the principal and what the principals had done in relation to facilitating their teachers' use of the revised science curriculum.

A secondary analysis of these data (Hall, Hord & Griffin, 1980), led to the hypothesis that the degree of implementation varied in each of these schools based upon the concerns and intervention behaviors of the school principals. Further, it was hypothesized that there were apparent patterns of behaviors that each of the principals used that could be summarized and appeared to be stereotypic of particular styles.

In two subsequent studies these emerging change facilitator styles became the focus of study. The outcomes have included clarification of these three change facilitator styles, more detailed descriptions of them and development of a related conceptual framework about the role of the principal in facilitating implementation.

The paragraph definitions for each of these change facilitator styles are included as Figure 1. It should be noted that other styles clearly exist. These three, Responder, Manager and Initiator, have been the focus of concentrated study. These change facilitating styles have been observed in principals who are working in schools that were considered to be successful and where implementation has occurred. It is quite likely that in schools where implementation had failed or had been drastically altered from the desired course that other principal styles would be found. One can also imagine several other styles that principals could employ.

Clearly any one principal could lie on a continuum from being more of a Responder, to more of a Manager, to more of an Initiator. At the extreme ends other styles could be imagined including the despot and a laissez-faire style. Many principals will not represent pure styles, but some principals do appear to follow fairly closely the different styles described in Figure 1. Some of these principals were selected to assist in the third principal study. What is being suggested here is three different change facilitator styles that principals may represent to a more or less degree.

## The Principal-Teacher Interaction Study

In the most recent study of principal change facilitator style, nine elementary school principals in three different school districts and their staffs were selected for study. These principals and their staffs were involved in implementation of curriculum innovations. Each school district was in a different year of implementation. The three schools in one school district were involved in their first year of implementation of a writing curriculum The second school district was involved in the second year of implementation of a unified math curriculum. The third school district was in the third year of district-wide implementation of a revised science curriculum.

FIGURE 1
DESCRIPTIONS OF THREE CHANGE FACILITATOR STYLES

Initiators have clear, decisive long-range policies and goals that transcend but include implementation of the current innovation. They tend to have very strong beliefs about what good schools and teaching should be like and work intensely to attain this vision. Decisions are made in relation to their goals for the school and in terms of what they believe to be best for students, which is based on current knowledge of classroom practice. Initiators have strong expectations for students, teachers and themselves. They convey and monitor these expectations through frequent contacts with teachers and clear explication of how the school is to operate and how teachers are to teach. When they feel it is in the best interest of their school, particularly the students, Initiators will seek changes in district programs or policies or they will reinterpret them to suit the needs of the school. Initiators will be adamant but not unkind, they solicit input from staff and then decisions are made in terms of the goals of the school, even if some are ruffled by their directness and high expectations.

Managers represent a broader range of behaviors. They demonstrate both responsive behaviors in answer to situations or people and they also initiate actions in support of the change effort. The variations in their behavior seem to be linked to their rapport with teachers and central office staff as well as how well they understand and buy into a particular change effort. Managers work without fanfare to provide basic support to facilitate teachers' use of an innovation. They keep teachers informed about decisions and are sensitive to teacher needs. They will defend their teachers from what are perceived as excessive demands. When they learn that the central office wants something to happen in their school they then become very involved with their teachers in making it happen. Yet, they do not typically initiate attempts to move beyond the basics of what is imposed.

Responders place heavy emphasis on allowing teachers and others the opportunity to take the lead. They believe their primary role is to maintain a smooth running school by focusing on traditional administrative tasks, keeping teachers content and treating students well. They view teachers as strong professionals who are able to carry out their instructional role with little guidance. Responders emphasize the personal side of their relationships with teachers and others. Before they make decisions they often give everyone an opportunity to have input so as to weigh their feelings or to allow others to make the decision. A related characteristic is the tendency toward making decisions in terms of immediate circumstances rather than in terms of longer range instructional or school goals. This seems to be due in part to their desire to please others and in part to their more limited vision of how their school and staff should change in the future.

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In each district principals were asked to participate based on their overall change facilitating style. Using researcher supplied descriptions, key central office administrators made recommendations for principals and schools to be involved in the study. Then the principal and their teachers were approached to see if they would be willing to allow the researchers to document the interventions that principals made and to document implementation at the classroom level as it was occurring.

Again it should be emphasized that all schools and principals were seen as being successful by their districts. The emphasis here was upon examining the different change facilitating roles that principals can take and to develop concrete descriptions of the day-to-day behaviors that made up that role. The final objective was to relate these styles to implementation success as it was defined in terms of teachers' use of the new curriculum. Schools or principals that were in "trouble" were not considered. Schools that were in danger of having unsuccessful implementations were not considered. This was an effort to identify and study varying degrees of success, rather than the all too familiar case studies of implementation failure.

Once agreement had been reached with the principal and the teachers for participation in the study, the principals received brief orientation and training in how to document the interventions that they were making. The intervention documentation procedures that the principals used were developed out of an earlier field study (Griffin, Goldstein & Hall, 1981). Principals were then interviewed on site at four different points during the school year and through bi-weekly telephone calls in which they nominate the various interventions that they had made. All of these interviews were audio tape-recorded. Subsequently the research staff used a special form to describe the different interventions and code the parts of each intervention that was identified.

The data analyses were based upon two intervention analysis frameworks that had been developed in previous research. These were the Intervention Taxonomy (Hall, Zigarmi & Hord, 1979; Hall & Hord, 1983) within which the various levels of interventions are identified. These levels vary from incident to tactic to strategy to game plan component to game plan and policy level interventions. The other analysis framework was the Intervention Anatomy framework (Hord, Hall & Zigarmi, 1980). With this framework the internal parts of interventions were coded. Each principal intervention was encoded in terms of source, target, function, location, medium, flow and duration. With these data it was then possible to do a series of systematic, quantitative and qualitative analyses about the frequency and character of the various interventions that the different principals made.

## Findings

The findings have been reported in more systematic detail and a series of papers that were presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association in March of 1983 in Montreal (Rutherford, Hord & Huling, 1983; Hord, Huling & Stiegelbauer, 1983; Hall & Rutherford, 1983; Huling, Hall, Hord & Rutherford, 1983; Hord, Hall & Stiegelbauer, 1983). Some of the findings that related specifically to the change facilitator of the principal are summarized in Figure 2. In this particular analyses the incident level interventions were selected and comparisons were made in terms of the types and characteristics of the interventions that each style of principal did. As clearly can be seen, although many aspects of the principal interventions were similar, some striking and systematic differences were observed with the Initiator-style principals doing more of some types of interventions, Manager-style principals doing more or less of others and Responder-style principals doing more or less of still others.

The overall conclusion from this systematic study of principals was that the principals did indeed carry out interventions in ways that were consistent with each of the three change facilitator styles that had been identified.

## Summary

The reader is invited to contact the authors or the director of communications at the R&D Center for Teacher Education if they wish to know more about the conceptual framework, data analyses and findings from this study. In general it was observed that different principals were internally consistent in terms of the interventions that they made as would be predicted in terms of their overall style. Further, as a result of the study it was possible to expand the descriptions of each style and to develop a set of behavioral indicators that could be used to more clearly identify the kinds of interventions that would be characteristic of each change facilitating style (Hall, Rutherford, Hord & Huling, 1983).

Another set of analyses that were done that have turned out to be particularly interesting had to do with relating the principal's change facilitator style to implementation success. To do this, each of the 9 study principals were assigned a rating with regard to how closely they approximated a particular style as described in the Figure 1 definitions. Based upon this rating it was possible to do a correlational analysis between the change facilitating style of the principal and implementation success (Huling, Hall, Hord & Rutherford, 1983).

Implementation success was defined in terms of the concepts of Stages of Concern (Hall & Rutherford, 1976), Levels of Use (Hall & Loucks, 1977) and Innovation Configurations (Hall & Loucks, 1981)

Figure 2

SUMMARY OF IDENTIFIED CELLS IN THE PRINCIPAL INCIDENT INTERVENTION CODINGS THAT CONTRIBUTED HEAVILY TO SIGNIFICANCE OF THE $X^2$ STATISTIC

Principals using the Initiator style did more than expected:

--interventions for global rule and policy decision making (Function 1A)

--interventions taking place in classrooms (Location IC)

Principals using the Initiator style did fewer than expected:

--simple incident interventions (Sublevel 2)

--interventions aimed at individual teachers (Target 2)

--interventions aimed at central office innovation facilitators (Target 7)

--interventions aimed at subsets of teachers as intact groups (e.g., all 3rd grade teachers) (Target 3C)

--interventions that were interactive (Flow 2)

Principals using the Manager style did more than expected:

--interventions to subsets of teachers as groups (Target 3B)

--monitoring and evaluating to report findings (Function 4C)

--monitoring and evaluating that had to be specified by the coder (Function 4E)

Principals using the Responder style did fewer than expected:

--interventions that were complex incidents (Sublevel 3)

--interventions that were aimed directly at students (Target 1)

Hall, G. E. & Rutherford, W. L. Three change facilitator styles: How principals affect improvement efforts. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Montreal, 1983.

which are demonstrated ways for documenting implementation at the classroom level. To make judgments about which schools had more success a combination of research staff and key central office administrators from each of the study districts were brought together. They reviewed each dimension of implementation separately and rank-ordered the nine schools on it. These rankings were then combined to give an overall rating of implementation success.

The outcome of the correlational analysis was an overall correlation of .74 between change facilitating style and overall implementation success. This correlation was in the direction of schools with Manager-style principals having higher implementation than schools with Responder-style principals and schools with Initiator-style principals had higher implementation still.

This analyses tends to support the work of Edmonds and the summary of Leithwood and Montgomery, as well as Venezky and Winfield's (1979) description of characteristics of principals in more effective schools. The Initiator style seems to get more accomplished in terms of implementation in a shorter period of time. It should be noted that the Manager-style principals were also seen as successful, it was just that they did not move as far. Again, the Responder-style schools were not unsuccessful it is just that their rate of progress was slower.

A related analysis that adds further light on the role and effects of the principal's change facilitating style was to examine the psychological climate (Hall & Griffin, 1982) that was exhibited in each school. In terms of this analysis teachers in schools with Manager-style principals had a slightly more positive climate than teachers in schools that had Initiator-style principals. And climate scores for teachers with Responder-style principals came out lowest.

This analysis points out one of the dilemmas of the multivariate world that change facilitation and schooling is. On any single dimension one particular style of principal may look good. However, if the criterion for success is shifted then another style may seem to be more appropriate. The implication for all of us that are involved in research, evaluation, training, policy development and the monitoring of implementation is that the criterion for success that is being considered must be carefully thought out. Further, no one style is likely to be perfect for all situations.

A related discussion point out of the research that has been going on at the R&D Center for Teacher Education has to do with the possibility, readiness and likelihood of a person changing his or her style. It is our considered opinion at this point that a person does not change change facilitating style very easily. It is quite likely that individual behaviors can be changed and that principals will change the behaviors as the context within which they are working shifts. However, their overall style in terms of their motivation,

concerns and tone of delivery of interventions is likely to remain relatively constant.

There are many implications of this work, one certainly being that no two-day workshop is likely to change a principal's change facilitating style. It also suggests that in terms of planning for implementation that the style of the principal should be considered more closely, since the ancillary support that a particular school receives will likely need to be adjusted and be different in character depending upon the change facilitating style of the principal.

This particularly comes true when a related set of findings out of the Principal-Teacher Interaction Study are reported. A serendipitous discovery in this work was the identification of a Second Change Facilitator or Consigliere was a significant intervenor in each of the nine study schools (Hord, Stiegelbauer & Hall, 1983). Regardless of the change facilitating style of the principal there was a second person who served a very important change facilitating role. This Second CF or Consigliere was not necessarily the assistant principal and was not necessarily located within the building (although in the cases of Initiator and Manager-style principals they were).

The reason for raising this particular finding here is to point out that planning for change efforts in schools requires that more be considered than the style of the principal. Identification of the Consigliere becomes another key. We would further recommend that the principal and their Consigliere be provided with the leadership training in advance of implementation, and that they be viewed as a change facilitator throughout.

It is clear from the research that we have been doing that the principal is important, that different change facilitator styles can be identified and described, and that the day-to-day behaviors of principals can be sorted in terms of those that appear to be more useful and helpful in implementation. It also is clear that the principal should not be considered in isolation from his or her colleagues and other aspects of the school setting. The Consigliere is a key role and needs further consideration and elaboration. Also characteristics of the innovation itself need to be considered as implementation efforts are unfolding.

As a part of our ongoing research on supporting principals and teachers in implementation and examining the various role and strategies and techniques that can be used to facilitate implementation, the set of studies around the principal as a change facilitator have turned out to be very productive. As research continues and as we now explore the change process in the high school setting we are certain to identify other key variables and factors that should be and can be systematically considered in planning, facilitating and monitoring school improvement efforts.

We invite others to join in the search and we welcome exchange of ideas and the sharing of findings with regard to other research and practice experiences that can be related.

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